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ART. I. — *History of Spanish Literature.* By GEORGE TICKNOR. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1849. 3 vols. 8vo.

LITERARY history is the least familiar kind of historical writing. It is, in some respects, the most difficult, requiring, and certainly, far the most laborious study. The facts for civil history we gather from personal experience, or from the examination of a comparatively few authors, whose statements the historian transfers, with such modification and commentary as he pleases, to his own pages. But in literary history, the books are the facts, and pretty substantial ones in many cases, which are not to be mastered at a glance, or on the report of another. It is a tedious process to read through a library in order to decide that the greater part is probably not worth reading at all.

Literary history must come late in the intellectual development of a nation. It is the history of books, and there can be no history of books till books are written. It presupposes, moreover, a critical knowledge, — an acquaintance with the principles of taste, which can come only from a wide study and comparison of models. It is, therefore, necessarily the product of an advanced state of civilization and mental culture.

Although criticism, in one form or another, was studied and exemplified by the ancients, yet they made no progress

in direct literary history. Neither has it been cultivated by all the nations of modern Europe. At least, in some of them it has met with very limited success. In England, one might have thought, from the free scope given to the expression of opinion, it would have flourished beyond all other countries. But Italy, and even Spain, with all the restraint imposed on intellectual movement, have done more in this way than the whole Anglo-Saxon race. The very freedom with which the English could enter on the career of political action has not only withdrawn them from the more quiet pursuits of letters, but has given them a decided taste for descriptions of those stirring scenes in which they or their fathers have taken part. Hence the great preponderance with them, as with us, of civil history over literary.

It may be further remarked, that the monastic institutions of Roman catholic countries have been peculiarly favorable to this, as to some other kinds of composition. The learned inmates of the cloister have been content to solace their leisure with those literary speculations and inquiries which had no immediate connection with party excitement and the turmoils of the world. The best literary histories, from whatever cause, in Spain and in Italy, have been the work of members of some one or other of the religious fraternities.

Still another reason of the attention given to this study in most of those countries may be found in the embarrassments existing there to the general pursuit of science, which have limited the powers to the more exclusive cultivation of works of imagination, and those other productions of elegant literature that come most properly within the province of taste and of literary criticism.

Yet in England, during the last generation, in which the mind has been unusually active, if there have been few elaborate works especially devoted to criticism, the electric fluid has been imperceptibly carried off from a thousand minor points, in the form of essays and periodical reviews, which cover nearly the whole ground of literary inquiry, both foreign and domestic. The student who has the patience to consult these scattered notices, if he cannot find a system ready made to his hands, may digest one for himself by a comparison of contradictory judgments on every topic under review. Yet it may be doubted if the multitude of cross

lights thrown at random over his path will not serve rather to perplex than to enlighten him.

Wherever we are to look for the reasons, the fact will hardly be disputed, that, since Warton's learned fragment, no general literary history has been produced in England which is likely to endure, with the exception of Hallam's late work, that, under the modest title of an "Introduction," gives a general survey of the scientific and literary culture of Europe during three centuries. If the English have done so little in this way for their own literature, it can hardly be expected that they should do much for that of their neighbors. If they had extended their researches to the Continent, it might probably have been in the direction of Spain; for no country has been made with them the subject of so large historical investigation. One or two good histories devoted to Italy and Germany, as many to the revolutionary period of France, — the country with which they are most nearly brought into contact, — make up the sum of what is of positive value in this way. But for Spain, a series of writers, — Robertson, Watson, Dunlop, Lord Mahon, Coxe, some of the highest order, all respectable, — have exhibited the political annals of the monarchy under the Austrian and Bourbon dynasties. Even at the present moment, a still livelier interest seems to be awakened to the condition of this romantic land. Two excellent works, by Head and by Stirling — the latter of especial value — have made the world acquainted for the first time with the rich treasures of art in the Peninsula. And last, not least, Ford, in his *Hand-Book* and other works, has joined to a curious erudition that knowledge of the Spanish character and domestic institutions that can be obtained only from singular acuteness of observation combined with a long residence in the country he describes.

Spain, too, has been the favorite theme of more than one of our own writers, in history and romance; and now the long list is concluded by the attempt of the work before us to trace the progress of intellectual culture in the Peninsula.

No work on a similar extended plan is to be found in Spain itself. Their own literary histories have been chiefly limited to the provinces, or to particular departments of letters. We may except, indeed, the great work of Father Andres, which, comprehending the whole circle of European science

and literature, left but a comparatively small portion to his own country. To his name may also be added that of Lamillas, whose work, however, from its rambling and its controversial character, throws but a very partial and unsatisfactory glance on the topics which he touches.

The only books on a similar plan, which cover the same ground with the one before us, are the histories of Bouterwek and Sismondi. The former was written as part of a great plan for the illustration of European art and science since the revival of learning, — projected by a literary association in Göttingen. The plan, as is too often the case in such co-partnerships, was very imperfectly executed. The best fruits of it were the twelve volumes of Bouterwek, on the elegant literature of modern Europe. That of Spain occupies one of these volumes.

It is written with acuteness, perspicuity, and candor. Notwithstanding the writer is perhaps too much under the influence of certain German theories then fashionable, his judgments, in the main, are temperate and sound, and he is entitled to great credit as the earliest pioneer in this untrodden field of letters. The great defect in the book is the want of proper materials on which to rest these judgments. Of this the writer more than once complains. It is a capital defect, not to be compensated by any talent or diligence in the author. For in this kind of writing, as we have said, books are facts, the very stuff, out of which the history is to be made.

Bouterwek had command of the great library of Göttingen. But it would not be safe to rely on any one library, however large, for supplying all the materials for an extended literary history. Above all this is true of Spanish literature. The difficulty of making a literary collection in Spain is far greater than in most other parts of Europe. The booksellers' trade there is a very different affair from what it is in more favored regions. The taste for reading is not, or, rather, has not been, sufficiently active to create a demand for the republication always of even the best authors, the ancient editions of whose works have become scarce and most difficult to be procured. The impediment to a free expression of opinion has condemned many more works to the silence of manuscript. And these manuscripts are preserved, or, to say truth, buried, in the collections of old families, or of public institutions,

where it requires no ordinary interest with the proprietors, private or public, to be allowed to disinter them. Some of the living Spanish scholars are now busily at work in these useful explorations, the result of which they are giving from time to time to the world, in the form of *livraisons*, or numbers, which seem likely to form an important contribution to historical science. For the impulse thus given to these patriotic labors the world is mainly indebted to the late venerable Navarrete, who, in his own person, led the way by the publication of a series of important historical documents. It is only from these obscure and uncertain repositories, and from booksellers' stalls, that the more rare and recondite works in which Spain is so rich can be procured; and it is only under great advantages that the knowledge of their places of deposit can be obtained, and that, having obtained it, the works can be had, at a price proportioned to their rarity. The embarrassments caused by this circumstance have been greatly diminished under the more liberal spirit of the present day, which, on a few occasions, has even unlocked the jealous archives of Simancas, that Robertson, backed by the personal authority of the British ambassador, strove in vain to penetrate.

Spanish literature occupies also one volume of Sismondi's popular work on the culture of Southern Europe. But Sismondi was far less instructed in literary criticism than his German predecessor, of whose services he has freely availed himself in the course of his work. Indeed, he borrows from him, not merely thoughts, but language, translating from the German page after page, and incorporating it with his own eloquent commentary. He does not hesitate to avow his obligations; but they prove at once his own deficiencies in the performance of his critical labors, as well as in the possession of the requisite materials. Sismondi's ground was civil history, whose great lessons no one had meditated more deeply; and it is in the application of these lessons to the character of the Spaniards, and in tracing the influence of that character on their literature, that a great merit of his work consists. He was, moreover, a Frenchman, — or, at least, a Frenchman in language and education; and he was prepared, therefore, to correct some of the extravagant theories of the German critics, and to rectify some of their judg-

ments by a moral standard, which they had entirely overlooked in their passion for the beautiful.

With all his merits, however, and the additional grace of a warm and picturesque style, his work, like that of Bouterwek, must be admitted to afford only the outlines of the great picture, which they have left to other hands to fill up in detail, and on a far more extended plan. To accomplish this great task is the purpose of the volumes before us; we are now to inquire, with what result. But, before entering on the inquiry, we will give some account of the preparatory training of the writer, and the materials which he has brought together.

Mr. Ticknor, who now first comes before the world in the avowed character of an author, has long enjoyed a literary reputation which few authors who have closed their career might not envy. While quite a young man, he was appointed to fill the chair of Modern Literature in Harvard College, on the foundation of the late Samuel Eliot, a name to be honored by the scholar, not only for its generous patronage, but for the important services it has rendered, and still renders to the cause of letters. To prepare himself for this post, Mr. Ticknor visited Europe, and passed several years there, to study the languages and literatures of the different countries on their own soil. A long time was passed in diligent study at Göttingen. In Paris, he explored, under able teachers, the difficult *romance* dialects, the medium of the beautiful Provençal.

During his residence in Spain, he perfected himself in the Castilian, and established an intimacy with her most eminent scholars, who aided him in the collection of rare books and manuscripts, to which he assiduously devoted himself. It is a proof of the literary consideration which, even at that early age, he had obtained in the society of Madrid, that he was elected a corresponding member of the Royal Academy of History. His acquisitions in the early literature of modern Europe attracted the notice of Sir Walter Scott, who, in a letter to Southey, printed in Lockhart's *Life*, speaks of his young guest (Mr. Ticknor was then at Abbotsford) as "a wonderful fellow for romantic lore."

On his return home, Mr. Ticknor entered at once on his academic labors, and delivered a series of lectures on the

Castilian and French literatures, as well as on some portions of the English, before successive classes, which he continued to repeat, with the occasional variation of oral instruction, during the fifteen years he remained at the University.

We well remember the sensation produced on the first delivery of these lectures, which served to break down the barrier which had so long confined the student to a converse with antiquity ; they opened to him a free range among those great masters of modern literature who had hitherto been veiled in the obscurity of a foreign idiom. The influence of this instruction was soon visible in the higher education, as well as the literary ardor shown by the graduates. So decided was the impulse thus given to the popular sentiment, that considerable apprehension was felt lest modern literature was to receive a disproportionate share of attention in the scheme of collegiate education.

After the lapse of fifteen years so usefully employed, Mr. Ticknor resigned his office, and, thus released from his academic labors, paid a second visit to Europe, where, in a second residence of three years, he much enlarged the amount and the value of his literary collection. In the more perfect completion of this he was greatly assisted by the professor of Arabic in the University of Madrid, Don Pascual de Gayangos, a scholar to whose literary sympathy and assistance more than one American writer has been indebted, and who to a profound knowledge of Oriental literature unites one equally extensive in the European.

With these aids, and his own untiring efforts, Mr. Ticknor succeeded in bringing together a body of materials in print and manuscript, for the illustration of the Castilian, such as, probably, has no rival either in public or private collections. This will be the more readily believed, when we find that nearly every author employed in the composition of this great work — with the exception of a few for which he has made ample acknowledgments — is to be found on his own shelves. We are now to consider in what manner he has availed himself of this inestimable collection of materials.

The title of the book — the “History of Spanish Literature” — is intended to comprehend all that relates to the poetry of the country, its romances, and works of imagination of every sort, its criticism and eloquence, — in short, what-

ever can be brought under the head of elegant literature. Even its chronicles and regular histories are included ; for, though scientific in their import, they are still, in respect to their style and their execution as works of art, brought into the department of ornamental writing. In Spain, freedom of thought, or, at least, the free expression of it, has been so closely fettered that science, in its strictest sense, has made little progress in that unhappy country, and a history of its elegant literature is, more than in any other land, a general history of its intellectual progress.

The work is divided into three great periods, having reference to time rather than to any philosophical arrangement. Indeed, Spanish literature affords less facilities for such an arrangement than the literature of many other countries, as that of England and of Italy, for example, where, from different causes, there have been periods exhibiting literary characteristics that stamp them with a peculiar physiognomy. For example, in England we have the age of Elizabeth, the age of Queen Anne, our own age. In Italy, the philosophical arrangement seems to correspond well enough with the chronological. Thus, the Trecentisti, the Seicentisti, convey ideas as distinct and as independent of each other as the different schools of Italian art. But in Spain, literature is too deeply tinctured at its fountain-head not to retain somewhat of the primitive coloring through the whole course of its descent. Patriotism, chivalrous loyalty, religious zeal, under whatever modification, and under whatever change of circumstances, have constituted, as Mr. Ticknor has well insisted, the enduring elements of the national literature. And it is this obvious preponderance of these elements throughout, which makes the distribution into separate masses on any philosophical principle extremely difficult. A proof of this is afforded by the arrangement now adopted by Mr. Ticknor himself, in the limit assigned to his first period, which is considerably shorter than that assigned to it in his original Lectures. The alteration, as we shall take occasion to notice hereafter, is, in our judgment, a decided improvement.

The first great division embraces the whole time from the earliest appearance of a written document in the Castilian to the commencement of the sixteenth century, the reign of Charles the Fifth, — a period of nearly four centuries.

At the very outset, we are met by the remarkable Poem of the *Cid*, that primitive epic, which, like the *Nieblungenlied* or the *Iliad*, stands as the traditional legend of an heroic age, exhibiting all the freshness and glow which belong to the morning of a nation's existence. The name of the author, as is often the case with those memorials of the olden time, when the writer thought less of himself than of his work, has not come down to us. Even the date of its composition is uncertain, — probably before the year 1200 ; a century earlier than the poem of Dante ; a century and a half before Petrarch and Chaucer. The subject of it, as its name imports, is, the achievements of the renowned Ruy Diaz de Bivar — *the Cid, the Campeador*, “the lord, the champion,” as he was fondly styled by his countrymen, as well as by his Moorish foes, in commemoration of his prowess, chiefly displayed against the infidel. The versification is the fourteen-syllable measure, artless, and exhibiting all the characteristics of an unformed idiom, but, with its rough melody, well suited to the expression of the warlike and stirring incidents in which it abounds. It is impossible to peruse it without finding ourselves carried back to the heroic age of Castile ; and we feel that, in its simple and cordial portraiture of existing manners, we get a more vivid impression of the feudal period than is to be gathered from the more formal pages of the chronicler. Heeren has pronounced that the poems of Homer were one of the principal bonds which held the Grecian states together. The assertion may seem extravagant ; but we can well understand that a poem like that of the *Cid*, with all its defects as a work of art, by its proud historic recollections of an heroic age, should do much to nourish the principle of patriotism in the bosoms of the people.

From the “*Cid*” Mr. Ticknor passes to the review of several other poems of the thirteenth, and some of the fourteenth century. They are usually of considerable length. The Castilian muse, at the outset, seems to have delighted in works of *longue haleine*. Some of them are of a satirical character, directing their shafts against the clergy, with an independence which seems to have marked also the contemporaneous productions of other nations, but which, in Spain at least, was rarely found at a later period. Others of these venerable productions are tinged with the religious bigotry

which enters so largely into the best portions of the Castilian literature.

One of the most remarkable poems of the period is the *Danza General*, — the “Dance of Death.” The subject is not original with the Spaniards, and has been treated by the bards of other nations in the elder time. It represents the ghastly revels of the dread monarch, to which all are summoned, of every degree, from the potentate to the peasant.

“It is founded on the well-known fiction, so often illustrated both in painting and in verse during the Middle Ages, that all men, of all conditions, are summoned to the Dance of Death; a kind of spiritual masquerade, in which the different ranks of society, from the Pope to the young child, appear dancing with the skeleton form of Death. In this Spanish version it is striking and picturesque, — more so, perhaps, than in any other, — the ghastly nature of the subject being brought into a very lively contrast with the festive tone of the verses, which frequently recalls some of the better parts of those flowing stories that now and then occur in the “Mirror for Magistrates.”

“The first seven stanzas of the Spanish poem constitute a prologue, in which Death issues his summons partly in his own person, and partly in that of a preaching friar, ending thus: —

Come to the Dance of Death, all ye whose fate
By birth is mortal, be ye great or small;
And willing come, nor loitering, nor late,
Else force shall bring you struggling to my thrall:
For since yon friar hath uttered loud his call
To penitence and godliness sincere,
He that delays must hope no waiting here;
For still the cry is, Haste! and, Haste to all!

“Death now proceeds, as in the old pictures and poems, to summon, first, the Pope, then cardinals, kings, bishops, and so on, down to day-laborers; all of whom are forced to join his mortal dance, though each first makes some remonstrance, that indicates surprise, horror, or reluctance. The call to youth and beauty is spirited: —

Bring to my dance, and bring without delay,
Those damsels twain, you see so bright and fair;
They came, but came not in a willing way,
To list my chants of mortal grief and care:
Nor shall the flowers and roses fresh they wear,
Nor rich attire, avail their forms to save.
They strive in vain who strive against the grave;
It may not be; my wedded brides they are.”

Another poem, of still higher pretensions, but, like the last, still in manuscript, is the *Poema de José*, — The “Poem of

Joseph." It is, probably, the work of one of those Spanish Arabs who remained under the Castilian domination after the great body of their countrymen had retreated. It is written in the Castilian dialect, but in Arabic characters, as was not very uncommon with the writings of the Moriscoes. The story of Joseph is told, moreover, conformably to the version of the Koran, instead of that of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The manner in which the Spanish and the Arabic races were mingled together after the great invasion produced a strange confusion in their languages. The Christians who were content to dwell in their old places under the Moslem rule, while they retained their own language, not unfrequently adopted the alphabetical characters of their conquerors. Even the coins struck by some of the ancient Castilian princes, as they recovered their territory from the invaders, were stamped with Arabic letters. Not unfrequently, the archives and municipal records of the Spanish cities, for a considerable time after their restoration to their own princes, were also written in Arabic characters. On the other hand, as the great inundation gradually receded, the Moors who lingered behind under the Spanish sway often adopted the language of their conquerors, but retained their own written alphabet. In other words, the Christians kept their language and abandoned their alphabetical characters; while the Moslems kept their alphabetical characters and abandoned their language. The contrast is curious, and may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact, that the superiority conceded by the Spaniards to the Arabic literature in this early period led the few scholars among them to adopt, for their own compositions, the characters in which that literature was written. The Moriscoes, on the other hand, did what was natural, when they retained their peculiar writing, to which they had been accustomed in the works of their countrymen, while they conformed to the Castilian language, to which they had become accustomed in daily intercourse with the Spaniard. However explained, the fact is curious. But it is time we should return to the Spanish Arab poem.

We give the following translation of some of its verses by Mr. Ticknor, with his few prefatory remarks:—

“ On the first night after the outrage, Jusuf, as he is called in

the poem, when travelling along in charge of a negro, passes a cemetery on a hill-side where his mother lies buried.

And when the negro heeded not, that guarded him behind,
From off the camel Jusuf sprang, on which he rode confined,
And hastened, with all speed, his mother's grave to find,
Where he knelt and pardon sought, to relieve his troubled mind.

He cried, "God's grace be with thee still, O Lady mother dear!
O mother, you would sorrow, if you looked upon me here;
For my neck is bound with chains, and I live in grief and fear,
Like a traitor by my brethren sold, like a captive to the spear.

"They have sold me! they have sold me! though I never did them harm;
They have torn me from my father, from his strong and living arm,
By art and cunning they enticed me, and by falsehood's guilty charm,
And I go a base-bought captive, full of sorrow and alarm."

But now the negro looked about, and knew that he was gone,
For no man could be seen, and the camel came alone;
So he turned his sharpened ear, and caught the wailing tone,
Where Jusuf, by his mother's grave, lay making heavy moan.

And the negro hurried up, and gave him there a blow;
So quick and cruel was it, that it instant laid him low;
"A base-born wretch," he cried aloud, "a base-born thief art thou:
Thy masters, when we purchased thee, they told us it was so."

But Jusuf answered straight, "Nor thief nor wretch am I;
My mother's grave is this, and for pardon here I cry;
I cry to Allah's power, and send my prayer on high,
That, since I never wronged thee, his curse may on thee lie."

And then all night they travelled on, till dawned the coming day,
When the land was sore tormented with a whirlwind's furious sway;
The sun grew dark at noon, their hearts sunk in dismay,
And they knew not, with their merchandise, to seek or make their way."

The manuscript of the piece, containing about 1200 verses, though not entirely perfect, is in Mr. Ticknor's hands, with its original Arabic characters converted into the Castilian. He has saved it from the chances of time by printing it at length in his appendix, accompanied by the following commendations, which, to one practised in the old Castilian literature, will probably not be thought beyond its deserts.

"There is little, as it seems to me, in the early narrative poetry of any modern nation better worth reading than this old Morisco version of the story of Joseph. Parts of it overflow with the tenderest natural affection; other parts are deeply pathetic; and everywhere it bears the impress of the extraordinary state of manners and society that gave it birth. From several passages, it may be inferred that it was publicly recited; and even now, as we read it, we fall unconsciously into a long-drawn chant, and seem to hear the voices of Arabian camel-drivers, or of Spanish muleteers, as the Oriental or the romantic tone hap-

pens to prevail. I am acquainted with nothing in the form of the old metrical romance that is more attractive, — nothing that is so peculiar, original, and separate from every thing else of the same class."

With these anonymous productions, Mr. Ticknor enters into the consideration of others from an acknowledged source, among which are those of the Prince Don Juan Manuel and Alfonso the Tenth, or Alfonso the Wise, as he is usually termed. He was one of those rare men who seem to be possessed of an almost universal genius. His tastes would have been better suited to a more refined period. He was, unfortunately, so far in advance of his age that his age could not fully profit by his knowledge. He was raised so far above the general level of his time, that the light of his genius, though it reached to distant generations, left his own in a comparative obscurity. His great work was the code of the *Siete Partidas*, — little heeded in his own day, though destined to become the basis of Spanish jurisprudence both in the Old World and in the New.

Alfonso caused the Bible, for the first time, to be translated into the Castilian. He was an historian, and led the way in the long line of Castilian writers in that department, by his *Cronica General*. He aspired also to the laurel of the Muses. His poetry is still extant in the Gallician dialect, which, the monarch thought, might in the end be the cultivated dialect of his kingdom. The want of a settled capital, or, to speak more correctly, the want of civilization, had left the different elements of the language contending as it were for the mastery. The result was still uncertain at the close of the thirteenth century. Alfonso himself did, probably, more than any other to settle it, by his prose compositions, — by the *Siete Partidas* and his Chronicle, as well as by the vernacular version of the Scriptures. The Gallician became the basis of the language of the sister kingdom of Portugal, and the generous dialect of Castile became, in Spain, the language of the court and of literature.

Alfonso directed his attention also to mathematical science. His astronomical observations are held in respect at the present day. But, as Mariana sarcastically intimates, while he was gazing at the stars he forgot the earth, and lost his kingdom. His studious temper was ill accommodated to the stir-

ring character of the times. He was driven from his throne by his factious nobles ; and in a letter written not long before his death, of which Mr. Ticknor gives a translation, the unhappy monarch pathetically deplores his fate and the ingratitude of his subjects. Alfonso the Tenth seemed to have at command every science but that which would have been of more worth to him than all the rest, — the science of government. He died in exile, leaving behind him the reputation of being the wisest fool in Christendom.

In glancing over the list of works which, from their anomalous character as well as their antiquity, are arranged by Mr. Ticknor in one class, as introductory to his history, we are struck with the great wealth of the period, — not great, certainly, compared with that of an age of civilization, but as compared with the productions of most other countries in this portion of the Middle Ages. Much of this ancient lore, which may be said to constitute the foundations of the national literature, has been but imperfectly known to the Spaniards themselves ; and we have to acknowledge our obligations to Mr. Ticknor, not only for the diligence with which he has brought it to light, but for the valuable commentaries, in text and notes, which supply all that could reasonably be demanded, both in a critical and bibliographical point of view. To estimate the extent of this information, we must compare it with what we have derived on the same subject from his predecessors ; where the poverty of original materials, as well as of means for illustrating those actually possessed, is apparent at a glance. Sismondi, with some art, conceals this poverty, by making the most of the little finery at his command. Thus his analysis of the Poem of the Cid, which he had carefully read, together with his prose translation of no inconsiderable amount, covers a fifth of what he has to say on the whole period, embracing more than four centuries. He has one fine bit of gold in his possession, and he makes the most of it, by hammering it out into a superficial extent altogether disproportionate to its real value.

Our author distributes the productions which occupy the greater part of the remainder of his first period into four great classes : Ballads, Chronicles, Romances of Chivalry, and the Drama. The mere enumeration suggests the idea of that rude, romantic age, when the imagination, impatient to find

utterance, breaks through the impediments of an unformed dialect, or, rather, converts it into an instrument for its purposes. Before looking at the results, we must briefly notice the circumstances under which they were effected.

The first occupants of the Peninsula who left abiding traces of their peculiar civilization were the Romans. Six tenths of the language now spoken are computed to be derived from them. Then came the Visigoths, bringing with them the peculiar institutions of the Teutonic races. And lastly, after the lapse of three centuries, came the great Saracen inundation, which covered the whole land up to the northern mountains, and, as it slowly receded, left a fertilizing principle, that gave life to much that was good as well as evil in the character and literature of the Spaniards. It was near the commencement of the eighth century that the great battle was fought, on the banks of the Guadalete, which decided the fate of Roderic, the last of the Goths, and of his monarchy. It was to the Goths—the Spaniards, as their descendants were called—what the battle of Hastings was to the English. The Arab conquerors rode over the country, as completely its masters as were the Normans of Britain. But they dealt more mercifully with the vanquished. The Koran, tribute, or the sword, were the terms offered by the victors. Many were content to remain under Moslem rule, in the tolerated enjoyment of their religion, and, to some extent, of their laws. Those of nobler metal withdrew to the rocks of the Asturias; and every muleteer or water-carrier, who emigrates from this barren spot, glories in his birthplace as of itself a patent of nobility.

Then came the struggle against the Saracen invaders,—that long crusade to be carried on for centuries,—in which the ultimate triumph of a handful of Christians over the large and flourishing empire of the Moslems is the most glorious of the triumphs of the cross upon record. But it was the work of eight centuries. During the first of these, the Spaniards scarcely ventured beyond their fastnesses. The conquerors occupied the land, and settled in greatest strength over the pleasant places of the south, so congenial with their own voluptuous climate in the East. Then rose the empire of Cordova, which, under the sway of the Omeiades, rivalled in splendor and civilization the caliphate of Bagdad. Poetry,

philosophy, letters, everywhere flourished. Academies and gymnasiums were founded, and Aristotle was expounded by commentators who acquired a glory not inferior to that of the Stagirite himself. This state of things continued after the Cordovan empire had been broken into fragments, when Seville, Murcia, Malaga, and the other cities which still flourished among the ruins, continued to be centres of a civilization that shone bright amidst the darkness of the Middle Ages.

Meanwhile, the Spaniards, strong in their religion, their Gothic institutions, and their poverty, had emerged from their fastnesses in the north, and brought their victorious banner as far as the Douro. In three centuries more, they had advanced their line of conquest only to the Tagus. But their progress, though slow, was irresistible, till at length the Moslems, of all their proud possessions, retained only the petty territory of Granada. On this little spot, however, they made a stand for more than two centuries, and bade defiance to the whole Christian power; while, at the same time, though sunk in intellectual culture, they surpassed their best days in the pomp of their architecture and in the magnificence of living characteristic of the East. At the close of the fifteenth century, this Arabian tale—the most splendid episode in the Mahometan annals—was brought to an end by the fall of Granada before the arms of Ferdinand and Isabella.

Such were the strange influences which acted on the Spanish character, and on the earliest development of its literature,—influences so peculiar, that it is no wonder they should have produced results to which no other part of Europe has furnished a parallel. The Oriental and the European for eight centuries brought into contact with one another!—yet, though brought into contact, too different in blood, laws, and religion, ever to coalesce. Unlike the Saxons and Normans, who, sprung from a common stock, with a common faith, were gradually blended into one people; in Spain, the conflicting elements could never mingle. No length of time could give the Arab a right to the soil. He was still an intruder. His only right was the right of the sword. He held his domain on the condition of perpetual war,—the war of race against race, of religion against religion. This was

the inheritance of the Spaniard, as well as of the Moslem, for eight hundred years. What remarkable qualities was this situation not calculated to call out! Loyalty, heroism, the patriotic feeling, and the loftier feeling of religious enthusiasm. What wonder that the soldier of the cross should fancy that the arm of Heaven was stretched out to protect him? That St. Jago should do battle for him, with his celestial chivalry? That miracles should cease to be miracles? That superstition, in short, should be the element, the abiding element, of the national character? Yet this religious enthusiasm, in the early ages, was tempered by charity towards a foe whom even the Christian was compelled to respect for his superior civilization. But, as the latter gained the ascendant, enthusiasm was fanned by the crafty clergy into fanaticism. As the Moslem scale became more and more depressed, fanaticism rose to intolerance, and intolerance ended in persecution when the victor was converted into the victim. It is a humiliating story, — more humiliating even to the oppressors than to the oppressed.

The literature, all the while, with chameleon-like sensibility, took the color of the times; and it is for this reason that we have always dwelt with greater satisfaction on the earlier period of the national literature, rude though it be, with its cordial, free, and high, romantic bearing, than on the later period of its glory — brilliant in an intellectual point of view, but in its moral aspect, dark and unrelenting.

Mr. Ticknor has been at much pains to unfold these peculiarities of the Castilian character, in order to explain by them the peculiarities of the literature, and indeed, to show their reciprocal action on each other. He has devoted occasional chapters to this subject, not the least interesting in his volumes, making the history of the literature a running commentary on that of the nation; and thus furnishing curious information to the political student, no less than to the student of letters. His acute, and at the same time accurate, observations, imbued with a spirit of sound philosophy, give the work a separate value, and raise it above the ordinary province of literary criticism.

But it is time that we should turn to the ballads, — or *romances*, as they are called in Spain, the first of the great divisions already noticed. Nowhere does this popular min-

streelsy flourish to the same extent as in Spain. The condition of the country, which converted every peasant into a soldier, and filled his life with scenes of stirring and romantic incident, may in part account for it. We have ballads of chivalry, of the national history, of the Moorish wars, mere domestic ballads, — in short, all the varieties of which such simple poetical narratives are susceptible. The most attractive of these to the Spaniards, doubtless, were those devoted to the national heroes. The Cid here occupies a large space. His love, his loyalty, his invincible prowess against the enemies of God, are all celebrated in the frank and cordial spirit of a primitive age. They have been chronologically arranged into a regular series, — as far as the date could be conjectured, — like the Robin Hood ballads in England, so as to form a tolerably complete narrative of his life. It is interesting to observe, with what fondness the Spaniards are ever ready to turn to their ancient hero, the very type of Castilian chivalry, and linked by so many glorious recollections with the heroic age of their country.

The following version of one of these ballads, by Mr. Ticknor, will give a fair idea of the original. The time chosen is the occasion of a summons made by the Cid to Queen Urraca to surrender her castle, which held out against the arms of the warrior's sovereign, Sancho the Brave.

“ Away ! away ! proud Roderic !
Castilian proud, away !
Bethink thee of that olden time,
That happy, honored day,
When, at Saint James's holy shrine,
Thy knighthood first was won ;
When Ferdinand, my royal sire,
Confessed thee for a son.
He gave thee then thy knightly arms,
My mother gave thy steed ;
Thy spurs were buckled by these hands,
That thou no grace might'st need.
And had not chance forbid the vow,
I thought with thee to wed ;
But Count Lozano's daughter fair
Thy happy bride was led.
With her came wealth, an ample store,
But power was mine, and state :

Broad lands are good, and have their grace,
But he that reigns is great.
Thy wife is well ; thy match was wise ;
Yet, Roderic ! at thy side
A vassal's daughter sits by thee,
And not a royal bride !”

Our author has also given a pleasing version of the beautiful *romance* of “*Fonte frida, fonte frida*,” — “Cooling fountain, cooling fountain,” — which we are glad to see rendered faithfully, instead of following the example of Dr. Percy, in his version of the fine old ballad in a similar simple style, “*Rio verde, rio verde*,” which, we remember, he translates by “Gentle river, gentle river,” &c. Indeed, to do justice to Mr. Ticknor's translations, we should have the text before us. Nowhere do we recall so close fidelity to the original, unless in Cary's Dante. Such fidelity does not always attain the object of conveying the best idea of the original. But in this humble poetry it is eminently successful. To give these rude gems a polish would be at once to change their character, and defeat the great object of our author, — to introduce his readers to the peculiar culture of a primitive age.

A considerable difficulty presents itself in finding a suitable measure for the English version of the *romances*. In the original they are written in the eight-syllable line, with trochaic feet, instead of the iambs usually employed by us. But the real difficulty is in the peculiarity of the measure — the *asonante*, as it is called, in which the rhyme depends solely on the conformity of vowel sounds, without reference to the consonants, as in English verse. Thus the words *dedo*, *tiempo*, *viejos*, are all good *asonantes*, taken at random from one of these old ballads. An attempt has been made by more than one clever writer to transplant them into English verse. But it has had as little success as the attempt to naturalize the ancient hexameter, which neither the skill of Southey nor of Longfellow will, probably, be able to effect. The Spanish vowels have, for the most part, a clear and open sound, which renders the melody of the versification sufficiently sensible to the ear ; while the middle station which it occupies between the perfect rhyme and blank verse seems to fit it, in an especial manner, for these simple narrative compositions. The same qualities have recommended it to the

dramatic writers of Spain as the best medium of poetical dialogue, and, as such, it is habitually used by the great masters of the national theatre.

No class of these popular compositions have greater interest than the Moorish *romances*, affording glimpses of a state of society in which the Oriental was strangely mingled with the European. Some of them may have been written by the Moriscoes, after the fall of Granada. They are redolent of the beautiful land which gave them birth, — springing up like wild-flowers amidst the ruins of the fallen capital. Mr. Ticknor has touched lightly on these in comparison with some of the other varieties, perhaps because they have been more freely criticized by preceding writers. Every lover of good poetry is familiar with Mr. Lockhart's picturesque version of these ballads, which has every merit but that of fidelity to the original.

The production of the Spanish ballads is evidence of great sensibility in the nation ; but it must also be referred to the exciting scenes in which it was engaged. A similar cause gave rise to the beautiful border minstrelsy of Scotland. But the adventures of robber chieftains and roving outlaws excite an interest of a very inferior order to that created by the great contest for religion and independence which gave rise to the Spanish ballads. This gives an ennobling principle to these compositions, which raises them far above the popular minstrelsy of every other country. It recommended them to the more polished writers of a later period, under whose hands, if they have lost something of their primitive simplicity, they have been made to form a delightful portion of the national literature. We cannot do better than to quote on this the eloquent remarks of our author.

“ Ballads, in the seventeenth century, had become the delight of the whole Spanish people. The soldier solaced himself with them in his tent, and the muleteer amidst the *sierras* ; the maiden danced to them on the green, and the lover sang them for his serenade ; they entered into the low orgies of thieves and vagabonds, into the sumptuous entertainments of the luxurious nobility, and into the holiday services of the Church ; the blind beggar chanted them to gather alms, and the puppet-showman gave them in recitative to explain his exhibition ; they were a part of the very foundation of the theatre, both secular and religious, and

the theatre carried them everywhere, and added everywhere to their effect and authority. No poetry of modern times has been so widely spread through all classes of society, and none has so entered into the national character. The ballads, in fact, seem to have been found on every spot of Spanish soil. They seem to have filled the very air that men breathed."

The next of the great divisions of this long period, is the Chronicles, — a fruitful theme, like the former, and still less explored. For much of this literature is in rare books, or rarer manuscripts. There is no lack of materials, however, in the present work, and the whole ground is mapped out before us, by a guide evidently familiar with all its intricacies.

The Spanish Chronicles are distributed into several classes, as those of a public and of a private nature, romantic chronicles, and those of travels. The work which may be said to lead the van of the long array is the "*Cronica General*" of Alfonso the Wise, written by this monarch probably somewhere about the middle of the thirteenth century. It covers a wide ground, from the Creation to the time of the royal writer. The third book is devoted to the Cid, ever the representative of the heroic age of Castile. The fourth records the events of the monarch's own time. Alfonso's work is followed by the "Chronicle of the Cid," in which the events of the champion's life are now first detailed in sober prose.

There is much resemblance between large portions of these two chronicles. This circumstance has led to the conclusion that they both must have been indebted to a common source, or, as seems more probable, that the "Chronicle of the Cid" was taken from that of Alfonso. This latter opinion Mr. Ticknor sustains by internal evidence not easily answered. There seems no reason to doubt, however, that both one and the other were indebted to the popular ballads, and that these, in their turn, were often little more than a versification of the pages of Alfonso's Chronicle; Mr. Ticknor has traced out this curious process by bringing together the parallel passages, which are too numerous and nearly allied to leave any doubt on the matter.

Sepulveda, a scholar of the sixteenth century, has converted considerable fragments of the "General Chronicle" into verse, without great violence to the original, — a remark-

able proof of the near affinity that exists between prose and poetry in Spain ; a fact which goes far to explain the facility and astonishing fecundity of some of its popular poets. For the Spaniards, it was nearly as easy to extemporize in verse as in prose.

The example of Alfonso the Tenth was followed by his son, who appointed a chronicler to take charge of the events of his reign. This practice continued with later sovereigns, until the chronicle gradually rose to the pretensions of regular history ; when historiographers, with fixed salaries, were appointed by the crowns of Castile and Aragon ; giving rise to a more complete body of contemporary annals, from authentic public sources, than is to be found in any other country in Christendom.

Such a collection, beginning with the thirteenth century, is of high value, and would be of far higher, were its writers gifted with any thing like a sound spirit of criticism. But superstition lay too closely at the bottom of the Castilian character to allow of this ; a superstition nourished by the strange circumstances of the nation, by the legends of the saints, by the miracles coined by the clergy in support of the good cause, by the very ballads of which we have been treating, which, mingling fact with fable, threw a halo around both that made it difficult to distinguish the one from the other. So palpable to a modern age are many of these fictions in regard to the Cid, that one ingenious critic doubts even the real existence of this personage. But this is a degree of scepticism, which, as Mr. Ticknor finely remarks, "makes too great a demand on our credulity."

This superstition, too deeply seated to be eradicated, and so repugnant to a philosophical spirit of criticism, is the greatest blemish on the writings of the Castilian historians, even of the ripest age of scholarship, who show an appetite for the marvellous and an easy faith scarcely to be credited at the present day. But this is hardly a blemish with the older chronicles, and was suited to the twilight condition of the times. They are, indeed, a most interesting body of ancient literature, with all the freshness and chivalrous bearing of the age ; with their long, rambling episodes, that lead to nothing ; their childish fondness for pageants and knightly spectacles ; their rough dialect, which, with the progress of time, working

off the impurities of an unformed vocabulary, rose, in the reign of John the Second and of Ferdinand and Isabella, into passages of positive eloquence. But we cannot do better than give the concluding remarks of our author on this rich mine of literature, which he has now, for the first time, fully explored and turned up to the public gaze.

“As we close it up,” he says,—speaking of an old chronicle he has been criticizing,—“we should not forget, that the whole series, extending over full two hundred and fifty years, from the time of Alfonso the Wise to the accession of Charles the Fifth, and covering the New World as well as the Old, is unrivalled in richness, in variety, and in picturesque and poetical elements. In truth, the chronicles of no other nation can, on such points, be compared to them; not even the Portuguese, which approach the nearest in original and early materials; nor the French, which, in Joinville and Froissart, make the highest claims in another direction. For these old Spanish chronicles, whether they have their foundations in truth or in fable, always strike farther down than those of any other nation into the deep soil of the popular feeling and character. The old Spanish loyalty, the old Spanish religious faith, as both were formed and nourished in the long periods of national trial and suffering, are constantly coming out; hardly less in Columbus and his followers, or even amidst the atrocities of the conquests in the New World, than in the half-miraculous accounts of the battles of Hazinas and Tolosa, or in the grand and glorious drama of the fall of Granada. Indeed, wherever we go under their leading, whether to the court of Tamerlane, or to that of Saint Ferdinand, we find the heroic elements of the national genius gathered around us; and thus, in this vast, rich mass of chronicles, containing such a body of antiquities, traditions, and fables as has been offered to no other people, we are constantly discovering, not only the materials from which were drawn a multitude of the old Spanish ballads, plays, and romances, but a mine which has been unceasingly wrought by the rest of Europe for similar purposes, and still remains unexhausted.”

We now come to the Romances of Chivalry, to which the transition is not difficult from the romantic chronicles we have been considering. It was, perhaps, the romantic character of these compositions, as well as of the popular minstrelsy of the country, which supplied the wants of the Spaniards in this way, and so long delayed the appearance of the true Romance of Chivalry.

Long before it was seen in Spain, this kind of writing had

made its appearance, in prose and verse, in other lands ; and the tales of Arthur and the Round Table, and of Charlemagne and his Peers, had beguiled the long evenings of our Norman ancestors, and of their brethren on the other side of the Channel. The first book of chivalry that was published in Spain even then was not indigenous, but translated from a Portuguese work, the *Amadis de Gaula*. But the Portuguese, according to the account of Mr. Ticknor, probably perished with the library of a nobleman, in the great earthquake at Lisbon, in 1755 ; so that Montalvan's Castilian translation, published in Queen Isabella's reign, now takes the place of the original. Of its merits as a translation who can speak ? Its merits as a work of imagination, and, considering the age, its literary execution, are of a high order.

An English version of the book appeared early in the present century, from the pen of Southey, to whom English literature is indebted for more than one valuable contribution of a similar kind. We well remember the delight with which, in our early days, we pored over its fascinating pages, — the bright scenes in which we revelled of Oriental mythology, the beautiful portraiture which is held up of knightly courtesy in the person of Amadis, and the feminine loveliness of Oriana. It was an ideal world of beauty and magnificence, to which the Southern imagination had given a far warmer coloring than was to be found in the ruder conceptions of the Northern minstrel. At a later period, we have read — tried to read — the same story in the pages of Montalvan himself. But the age of chivalry was gone.

The “ Amadis ” touched the right spring in the Castilian bosom, and its popularity was great and immediate. Edition succeeded edition ; and, what was worse, a swarm of other knight-errants soon came into the world, claiming kindred with the Amadis. But few of them bore any resemblance to their prototype, other than in their extravagance. Their merits were summarily settled by the worthy curate in “ Don Quixote,” who ordered most of them to the flames, declaring that the good qualities of Amadis should not cloak the sins of his posterity.

The tendency of these books was very mischievous. They fostered the spirit of exaggeration, both in language and sentiment, too natural to the Castilian. They debauched

the taste of the reader, while the voluptuous images, in which most of them indulged, did no good to his morals. They encouraged, in fine, a wild spirit of knight-errantry, which seemed to emulate the extravagance of the tales themselves. Sober men wrote, preachers declaimed against them, but in vain. The Cortes of 1553 presented a petition to the crown, that the publication of such works might be prohibited, as pernicious to society. Another petition of the same body, in 1555, insists on this still more strongly, and in terms that, coming, as they do, from so grave an assembly, can hardly be read at the present day without a smile. Mr. Ticknor notices both these legislative acts, in an extract which we shall give. But he omits the words of the petition of 1555, which dwells so piteously on the grievances of the nation; and which we will quote, as they may amuse the reader. "Moreover," says the instrument, "we say that it is very notorious what mischief has been done to young men and maidens, and other persons, by the perusal of books full of lies and vanities, like *Amadis*, and works of that description, since young people especially, from their natural idleness, resort to this kind of reading, and becoming enamoured of passages of love or arms, or other nonsense which they find set forth therein, when situations at all analogous offer, are led to act much more extravagantly than they otherwise would have done. And many times the daughter, when her mother has locked her up safely at home, amuses herself with reading these books, which do her more hurt than she would have received from going abroad. All which redounds, not only to the dishonor of individuals, but to the great detriment of conscience, by diverting the affections from holy, true, and Christian doctrine, to those wicked vanities, with which the wits, as we have intimated, are completely bewildered. To remedy this, we entreat your Majesty, that no book treating of such matters be henceforth permitted to be read, that those now printed be collected and burned, and that none be published hereafter without special license; by which measures your Majesty will render great service to God, as well as to these kingdoms," &c. &c.

But what neither the menaces of the pulpit nor the authority of the law could effect, was brought about by the breath of ridicule. —

"That soft and summer breath, whose subtile power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour."

The fever was at its height when Cervantes sent his knight-errant into the world, to combat the phantoms of chivalry ; and at one touch of his lance, they disappeared forever. From the day of the publication of the "*Don Quixote*" not a book of chivalry was ever written in Spain. There is no other such triumph recorded in the annals of genius.

We close these remarks with the following extract, which shows the condition of society in Castile under the influence of these romances.

"Spain, when the romances of chivalry first appeared, had long been peculiarly the land of knighthood. The Moorish wars, which had made every gentleman a soldier, necessarily tended to this result ; and so did the free spirit of the communities, led on as they were, during the next period, by barons, who long continued almost as independent in their castles as the king was on his throne. Such a state of things, in fact, is to be recognized as far back as the thirteenth century, when the *Partidas*, by the most minute and pains-taking legislation, provided for a condition of society not easily to be distinguished from that set forth in the *Amadis* or the *Palmerin*. The poem and history of the *Cid* bear witness yet earlier, indirectly indeed, but very strongly, to a similar state of the country ; and so do many of the old ballads and other records of the national feelings and traditions that had come from the fourteenth century.

"But in the fifteenth, the chronicles are full of it, and exhibit it in forms the most grave and imposing. Dangerous tournaments, in some of which the chief men of the time, and even the kings themselves, took part, occur constantly, and are recorded among the important events of the age. At the passage of arms near Orbigo, in the reign of John the Second, eighty knights, as we have seen, were found ready to risk their lives for as fantastic a fiction of gallantry as is recorded in any of the romances of chivalry ; a folly of which this was by no means the only instance. Nor did they confine their extravagances to their own country. In the same reign, two Spanish knights went as far as Burgundy, professedly in search of adventures, which they strangely mingled with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem ; seeming to regard both as religious exercises. And as late as the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, Fernando del Pulgar, their wise secretary, gives us the names of several distinguished noblemen, personally known to himself, who had gone into foreign countries, 'in order,' as he says, 'to try the fortune of arms with any cavalier that might

be pleased to adventure with them, and so gain honor for themselves, and the fame of valiant and bold knights for the gentlemen of Castile.'

"A state of society like this was the natural result of the extraordinary development which the institutions of chivalry had then received in Spain. Some of it was suited to the age, and salutary; the rest was knight-errantry, and knight-errantry in its wildest extravagance. When, however, the imaginations of men were so excited as to tolerate and maintain, in their daily life, such manners and institutions as these, they would not fail to enjoy the boldest and most free representations of a corresponding state of society in works of romantic fiction. But they went farther. Extravagant and even impossible as are many of the adventures recorded in the books of chivalry, they still seemed so little to exceed the absurdities frequently witnessed or told of known and living men, that many persons took the romances themselves to be true histories, and believed them. Thus, Mexia, the trustworthy historiographer of Charles the Fifth, says, in 1545, when speaking of 'the Amadis, Lisuartes, and Clarions,' that 'their authors do waste their time and weary their faculties in writing such books, which are read by all and believed by many. For,' he goes on, 'there be men who think all these things really happened, just as they read or hear them, though the greater part of the things themselves are sinful, profane, and unbecoming.' And Castillo, another chronicler, tells us gravely, in 1587, that Philip the Second, when he married Mary of England, only forty years earlier, promised, that, if King Arthur should return to claim the throne, he would peaceably yield to that prince all his rights; thus implying, at least in Castillo himself, and probably in many of his readers, a full faith in the stories of Arthur and his Round Table.

"Such credulity, it is true, now seems impossible, even if we suppose it was confined to a moderate number of intelligent persons; and hardly less so, when, as in the admirable sketch of an easy faith in the stories of chivalry by the innkeeper and Maritornes in *Don Quixote*, we are shown that it extended to the mass of the people. But before we refuse our assent to the statements of such faithful chroniclers as Mexia, on the ground that what they relate is impossible, we should recollect, that, in the age when they lived, men were in the habit of believing and asserting every day things no less incredible than those recited in the old romances. The Spanish Church then countenanced a trust in miracles, as of constant recurrence, which required of those who believed them more credulity than the fictions of chivalry; and yet how few were found wanting in faith! And how

few doubted the tales that had come down to them of the impossible achievements of their fathers during the seven centuries of their warfare against the Moors, or the glorious traditions of all sorts, that still constitute the charm of their brave old chronicles, though we now see at a glance that many of them are as fabulous as any thing told of Palmerin or Launcelot !

“ But whatever we may think of this belief in the romances of chivalry, there is no question that in Spain, during the sixteenth century, there prevailed a passion for them such as was never known elsewhere. The proof of it comes to us from all sides. The poetry of the country is full of it, from the romantic ballads that still live in the memory of the people, up to the old plays that have ceased to be acted and the old epics that have ceased to be read. The national manners and the national dress, more peculiar and picturesque than in other countries, long bore its sure impress. The old laws, too, speak no less plainly. Indeed, the passion for such fictions was so strong, and seemed so dangerous, that in 1553 they were prohibited from being printed, sold, or read in the American colonies ; and in 1555 the Cortes earnestly asked that the same prohibition might be extended to Spain itself, and that all the extant copies of romances of chivalry might be publicly burned. And finally, half a century later, the happiest work of the greatest genius Spain has produced bears witness on every page to the prevalence of an absolute fanaticism for books of chivalry, and becomes at once the seal of their vast popularity and the monument of their fate.”

We can barely touch on the Drama, the last of the three great divisions into which our author has thrown this period. It is of little moment, for down to the close of the fifteenth century, the Castilian drama afforded small promise of the brilliant fortunes that awaited it. It was born under an Italian sky. Almost its first lispsings were at the vice-regal court of Naples, and, under a foreign influence, it displayed few of the national characteristics which afterwards marked its career. Yet the germs of future excellence may be discerned in the compositions of Encina and Naharro ; and the “ *Celestina*,” though not designed for the stage, had a literary merit that was acknowledged throughout Europe.

Mr. Ticknor, as usual, accompanies his analysis with occasional translations of the best passages from the ancient masters. From one of these — a sort of dramatic eclogue, by Gil Vicente — we extract the following spirited verses. The scene represents Cassandra, the heroine of the piece, as

refusing all the solicitations of her family to change her state of maiden freedom for married life.

- “They say, ‘ ’T is time, go, marry ! go !’
 But I ’ll no husband ! not I ! no !
 For I would live all carelessly,
 Amidst these hills, a maiden free,
 And never ask, nor anxious be,
 Of wedded weal or woe.
 Yet still they say, ‘ Go, marry ! go !’
 But I ’ll no husband ! not I ! no !
- “ So, mother, think not I shall wed,
 And through a tiresome life be led,
 Or use, in folly’s ways instead,
 What grace the heavens bestow.
 Yet still they say, ‘ Go marry ! go !’
 But I ’ll no husband ! not I ! no !
- “ The man has not been born, I ween,
 Who as my husband shall be seen ;
 And since what frequent tricks have been
 Undoubtedly I know,
 In vain they say, ‘ Go marry ! go !’
 For I ’ll no husband ! not I ! no !”

She escapes to the woods, and her kinsmen, after in vain striving to bring her back, come in dancing and singing as madly as herself.

- “ She is wild ! She is wild !
 Who shall speak to the child ?
 On the hills pass her hours,
 As a shepherdess free ;
 She is fair as the flowers,
 She is wild as the sea !
 She is wild ! She is wild !
 Who shall speak to the child ?”

During the course of the period we have been considering there runs another rich vein of literature, the beautiful Provençal, — those lays of love and chivalry poured forth by the Troubadours in the little court of Provence, and afterwards of Catalonia. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the voice of the minstrel was hardly heard in other parts of Europe, the northern shores of the Mediterranean, on either side of the Pyrennees, were alive with song. But it

was the melody of a too early spring, to be soon silenced under the wintry breath of persecution.

Mr. Ticknor, who paid, while in Europe, much attention to the Romance dialects, has given a pleasing analysis of this early literature, after it had fled from the storms of persecution to the south of Spain. But few will care to learn a language which locks up a literature that was rather one of a beautiful promise than performance, — that prematurely perished and left no sign. And yet it did leave some sign of its existence, in the influence it exerted both on Italian and Castilian poetry.

This was peculiarly displayed at the court of John the Second of Castile, who flourished towards the middle of the fifteenth century. That prince gathered around him a circle of wits and poets, several of them men of the highest rank; and the intellectual spirit thus exhibited shows like a bright streak in the dawn of that higher civilization which rose upon Castile in the beginning of the following century. In this literary circle King John himself was a prominent figure, correcting the verses of his loving subjects, and occasionally inditing some of his own. In the somewhat severe language of Mr. Ticknor, "he turned to letters to avoid the importunity of business, and to gratify a constitutional indolence." There was, it is true, something ridiculous in King John's most respectable tastes, reminding us of the character of his contemporary, René of Anjou. But still it was something, in those rough times, to manifest a relish for intellectual pleasures; and it had its effect, in weaning his turbulent nobility from the indulgence of their coarser appetites.

The same liberal tastes, with still better result, were shown by his daughter, the illustrious Isabella, the Catholic. Not that any work of great pretensions for its poetical merits was then produced. The poetry of the age, indeed, was pretty generally infected with the meretricious conceits of the Provençal and the old Castilian verse. We must except from this reproach the "Coplas" of Jorge Manrique, which have found so worthy an interpreter in Mr. Longfellow, and which would do honor to any age. But the age of Isabella was in Castile what that of Poggio was in Italy. Learned men were invited from abroad, and took up their residence at the court. Native scholars went abroad, and brought back the

rich fruits of an education in the most renowned of the Italian universities. The result of this scholarship was the preparation of dictionaries, grammars, and various philological works, which gave laws to the language, and subjected it to a classic standard. Printing was introduced, and, under the royal patronage, presses were put in active operation in various cities of the kingdom. Thus, although no great work was actually produced, a beneficent impulse was given to letters, which trained up the scholar, and opened the way for the brilliant civilization of the reign of Charles the Fifth. Our author has not paid the tribute to the reign of Isabella to which, in our judgment, it is entitled even in a literary view. He has noticed with commendation the various efforts made in it to introduce a more liberal scholarship, but has by no means dwelt with the emphasis they deserve on the importance of the results.

With the glorious rule of Ferdinand and Isabella closes the long period from the middle of the twelfth to the beginning of the sixteenth century,—a period which, if we except Italy, has no rival in modern history for the richness, variety, and picturesque character of its literature. It is that portion of the literature which seems to come spontaneously like the vegetation of a virgin soil, that must lose something of its natural freshness and perfume when brought under a more elaborate cultivation. It is that portion which is most thoroughly imbued with the national spirit, unaffected by foreign influences; and the student who would fully comprehend the genius of the Spaniards must turn to these pure and primitive sources of their literary culture.

We cannot do better than close with the remarks in which Mr. Ticknor briefly, but with his usual perspicuity, sums up the actual achievements of the period.

“Poetry, or at least the love of poetry, made progress with the great advancement of the nation under Ferdinand and Isabella; though the taste of the court in whatever regarded Spanish literature continued low and false. Other circumstances, too, favored the great and beneficial change that was everywhere becoming apparent. The language of Castile had already asserted its supremacy, and, with the old Castilian spirit and cultivation, it was spreading into Andalusia and Aragon, and planting itself amidst the ruins of the Moorish power on the shores of the Mediterra-

nean. Chronicle-writing was become frequent, and had begun to take the forms of regular history. The drama was advanced as far as the 'Celestina' in prose, and the more strictly scenic efforts of Torres Naharro in verse. Romance-writing was at the height of its success. And the old ballad spirit — the true foundation of Spanish poetry — had received a new impulse and richer materials from the contests in which all Christian Spain had borne a part amidst the mountains of Granada, and from the wild tales of the feuds and adventures of rival factions within the walls of that devoted city. Every thing, indeed, announced a decided movement in the literature of the nation, and almost every thing seemed to favor and facilitate it."

The second great division embraces the long interval between 1500 and 1700, occupied by the Austrian dynasty of Spain. It covers the golden age, as generally considered, of Castilian literature; that in which it submitted in some degree to the influences of the advancing European civilization, and which witnessed those great productions of genius that have had the widest reputation with foreigners; the age of Cervantes, of Lope de Vega, and of Calderon. The condition of Spain itself was materially changed. Instead of being hemmed in by her mountain-barrier, she had extended her relations to every court in Europe, and established her empire in every quarter of the globe. Emerging from her retired and solitary condition, she now took the first rank among the states of Christendom. Her literature naturally took the impress of this change, but not to the extent — or, at least, not in the precise manner — it would have done, if left to its natural and independent action. But, unhappily for the land, the great power of its monarchs was turned against their own people, and the people were assailed, moreover, through the very qualities which should have entitled them to forbearance from their masters. Practising on their loyalty, their princes trampled on their ancient institutions, and loyalty was degraded into an abject servility. The religious zeal of early days, which had carried them triumphant through the Moorish struggle, turned, under the influence of the priests, into a sour fanaticism, which opened the way to the Inquisition, — the most terrible engine of oppression ever devised by man, — not so terrible for its operation on the body as on the mind. Under its baneful influence, literature

lost its free and healthy action ; and, however high its pretensions as a work of art, it becomes so degenerate in a moral aspect, that it has far less to awaken our sympathies than the productions of an earlier time. From this circumstance, as well as from that of its being much better known to the generality of scholars, we shall pass only in rapid review some of its most remarkable persons and productions. Before entering on this field, we will quote some important observations of our author on the general prospects of the period he is to discuss. Thus to allow coming events to cast their shadows before is better suited to the purposes of the literary historian, than of the novelist. His remarks on the Inquisition are striking.

“ The results of such extraordinary traits in the national character could not fail to be impressed upon the literature of any country, and particularly upon a literature which, like that of Spain, had always been strongly marked by the popular temperament and peculiarities. But the period was not one in which such traits could be produced with poetical effect. The ancient loyalty, which had once been so generous an element in the Spanish character and cultivation, was now infected with the ambition of universal empire, and was lavished upon princes and nobles who, like the later Philips and their ministers, were unworthy of its homage ; so that, in the Spanish historians and epic poets of this period, and even in more popular writers, like Quevedo and Calderon, we find a vainglorious admiration of their country, and a poor flattery of royalty and rank, that reminds us of the old Castilian pride and deference only by showing how both had lost their dignity. And so it is with the ancient religious feeling that was so nearly akin to this loyalty. The Christian spirit, which gave an air of duty to the wildest forms of adventure throughout the country, during its long contest with the power of misbelief, was now fallen away into a low and anxious bigotry, fierce and intolerant towards every thing that differed from its own sharply defined faith, and yet so pervading and so popular, that the romances and tales of the time are full of it, and the national theatre, in more than one form, becomes its strange and grotesque monument.

“ Of course, the body of Spanish poetry and eloquent prose produced during this interval — the earlier part of which was the period of the greatest glory Spain ever enjoyed — was injuriously affected by so diseased a condition of the national character. That generous and manly spirit which is the breath of

intellectual life to any people was restrained and stifled. Some departments of literature, such as forensic eloquence and eloquence of the pulpit, satirical poetry, and elegant didactic prose, hardly appeared at all ; others, like epic poetry, were strangely perverted and misdirected ; while yet others, like the drama, the ballads, and the lighter forms of lyrical verse, seemed to grow exuberant and lawless, from the very restraints imposed on the rest ; restraints which, in fact, forced poetical genius into channels where it would otherwise have flowed much more scantily and with much less luxuriant results.

“The books that were published during the whole period on which we are now entering, and indeed for a century later, bore everywhere marks of the subjection to which the press and those who wrote for it were alike reduced. From the abject title-pages and dedications of the authors themselves, through the crowd of certificates collected from their friends to establish the orthodoxy of works that were often as little connected with religion as fairy tales, down to the colophon, supplicating pardon for any unconscious neglect of the authority of the Church or any too free use of classical mythology, we are continually oppressed with painful proofs, not only how completely the human mind was enslaved in Spain, but how grievously it had become cramped and crippled by the chains it had so long worn.

“But we shall be greatly in error, if, as we notice these deep marks and strange peculiarities in Spanish literature, we suppose they were produced by the direct action either of the Inquisition or of the civil government of the country, compressing, as if with a physical power, the whole circle of society. This would have been impossible. No nation would have submitted to it ; much less so high-spirited and chivalrous a nation as the Spanish in the reign of Charles the Fifth and in the greater part of that of Philip the Second. This dark work was done earlier. Its foundations were laid deep and sure in the old Castilian character. It was the result of the excess and misdirection of that very Christian zeal which fought so fervently and gloriously against the intrusion of Mohammedanism into Europe, and of that military loyalty which sustained the Spanish princes so faithfully through the whole of that terrible contest ; — both of them high and ennobling principles, which in Spain were more wrought into the popular character than they ever were in any other country.

“Spanish submission to an unworthy despotism, and Spanish bigotry, were, therefore, not the results of the Inquisition and the modern appliances of a corrupting monarchy ; but the Inquisition and the despotism were rather the results of a misdirection of the old religious faith and loyalty. The civilization that recognized

such elements presented, no doubt, much that was brilliant, picturesque, and ennobling ; but it was not without its darker side ; for it failed to excite and cherish many of the most elevating qualities of our common nature, — those qualities which are produced in domestic life, and result in the cultivation of the arts of peace.

“As we proceed, therefore, we shall find, in the full development of the Spanish character and literature, seeming contradictions, which can be reconciled only by looking back to the foundations on which they both rest. We shall find the Inquisition at the height of its power, and a free and immoral drama at the height of its popularity, — Philip the Second and his two immediate successors governing the country with the severest and most jealous despotism, while Quevedo was writing his witty and dangerous satires, and Cervantes his genial and wise *Don Quixote*. But the more carefully we consider such a state of things, the more we shall see that these are moral contradictions which draw after them grave moral mischiefs. The Spanish nation and the men of genius who illustrated its best days, might be light-hearted because they did not perceive the limits within which they were confined, or did not, for a time, feel the restraints that were imposed upon them. What they gave up might be given up with cheerful hearts, and not with a sense of discouragement and degradation ; it might be done in the spirit of loyalty and with the fervor of religious zeal ; but it is not at all the less true that the hard limits were there, and that great sacrifices of the best elements of the national character must follow.

“Of this time gave abundant proof. Only a little more than a century elapsed before the government that had threatened the world with a universal empire was hardly able to repel invasion from abroad, or maintain the allegiance of its own subjects at home. Life — the vigorous, poetical life which had been kindled through the country in its ages of trial and adversity — was evidently passing out of the whole Spanish character. As a people they sunk away from being a first-rate power in Europe, till they became one of altogether inferior importance and consideration ; and then, drawing back haughtily behind their mountains, rejected all equal intercourse with the rest of the world, in a spirit almost as exclusive and intolerant as that in which they had formerly refused intercourse with their Arab conquerors. The crude and gross wealth poured in from their American possessions sustained, indeed, for yet another century the forms of a miserable political existence in their government ; but the earnest faith, the loyalty, the dignity of the Spanish people were gone ; and little remained in their place, but a weak subserviency to the unworthy masters

of the state, and a low, timid bigotry in whatever related to religion. The old enthusiasm, rarely directed by wisdom from the first, and often misdirected afterwards, faded away; and the poetry of the country, which had always depended more on the state of the popular feeling than any other poetry of modern times, faded and failed with it."

The first thing that strikes us, at the very commencement of this new period, is the attempt to subject the Castilian to Italian forms of versification. This attempt, through the perfect tact of Boscan, and the delicate genius of Garcilasso, who rivalled in their own walks the greatest masters of Italian verse, was eminently successful. It would, indeed, be wonderful if the intimate relations now established between Spain and Italy did not lead to a reciprocal influence of their literatures on each other. The two languages, descended from the same parent stock, the Latin, were nearest of kin to each other,—in the relation, if we may so speak, of brother and sister. The Castilian, with its deep Arabic gutturals, and its clear, sonorous sounds, had the masculine character, which assorted well with the more feminine graces of the Italian, with its musical cadences and soft vowel terminations. The transition from one language to the other was almost as natural as from the dialect of one province of a country to that of its neighbor.

The revolution thus effected went far below the surface of Spanish poetry. It is for this reason, that we are satisfied that Mr. Ticknor has judged wisely, as we have before intimated, in arranging the division lines of his two periods in such a manner as to throw into the former that primitive portion of the national literature which was untouched, at least to any considerable extent, by a foreign influence.

Yet, in the compositions of this second period, it must be admitted that by far the greater portion of what is really good rests on the original basis of the national character, though under the controlling influences of a riper age of civilization. And foremost of the great writers of this national school we find the author of "*Don Quixote*," whose fame seems now to belong to Europe, as much as to the land that gave him birth. Mr. Ticknor has given a very interesting notice of the great writer and of his various compositions. The mate-

rials for this are, for the most part, not very difficult to be procured ; for Cervantes is the author whom his countrymen, since his death, with a spirit very different from that of his contemporaries, have most delighted to honor. Fortunately, the Castilian romancer has supplied us with materials for his own biography, which remind us of the lamentable poverty under which we labor in all that relates to his contemporary, Shakspeare. In Mr. Ticknor's biographical notice, the reader will find some details probably not familiar to him, and a careful discussion of those points over which still rests any cloud of uncertainty.

He inquires into the grounds of the imputation of an unworthy jealousy having existed between Lope and his illustrious rival, and we heartily concur with him in the general results of his investigation.

“ Concerning his relations with Lope de Vega there has been much discussion to little purpose. Certain it is that Cervantes often praises this great literary idol of his age, and that four or five times Lope stoops from his pride of place and compliments Cervantes, though never beyond the measure of praise he bestows on many whose claims were greatly inferior. But in his stately flight, it is plain that he soared much above the author of *Don Quixote*, to whose highest merits he seemed carefully to avoid all homage ; and though I find no sufficient reason to suppose their relation to each other was marked by any personal jealousy or ill-will, as has been sometimes supposed, yet I can find no proof that it was either intimate or kindly. On the contrary, when we consider the good nature of Cervantes, which made him praise to excess nearly all his other literary contemporaries, as well as the greatest of them all, and when we allow for the frequency of hyperbole in such praises at that time, which prevented them from being what they would now be, we may perceive an occasional coolness in his manner, when he speaks of Lope, which shows, that, without overrating his own merits and claims, he was not insensible to the difference in their respective positions, or to the injustice towards himself implied by it. Indeed, his whole tone, whenever he notices Lope, seems to be marked with much personal dignity, and to be singularly honorable to him.”

Mr. Ticknor, in a note to the above, states that he has been able to find only five passages in all Lope de Vega's works where there is any mention of Cervantes, and not one

of these written after the appearance of the "Don Quixote," during its author's lifetime, — a significant fact. One of the passages to which our author refers, and which is from the "Laurel de Apolo," contains, he says, "a somewhat stiff eulogy on Cervantes." We quote the original couplet, which alludes to the injury inflicted on Cervantes' hand in the great Battle of Lepanto.

"Porque se diga que una mano herida
Pudo dar á su dueño eterna vida."

Which may be rendered,

The hand, though crippled in the glorious strife,
Sufficed to gain its lord eternal life.

We imagine that most who read the distich, — the Castilian, not the English, — will be disposed to regard it as no inelegant, and certainly not a parsimonious, tribute from one bard to another, — at least, if made in the lifetime of the subject of it. Unfortunately, it was not written till some fourteen years after the death of Cervantes, when he was beyond the power of being pleased or profited by praise from any quarter.

Mr. Ticknor closes the sketch of Cervantes with some pertinent and touching reflections on the circumstances under which his great work was composed.

"The romance which he threw so carelessly from him, and which, I am persuaded, he regarded rather as a bold effort to break up the absurd taste of his time for the fancies of chivalry than as any thing of more serious import, has been established by an uninterrupted, and, it may be said, an unquestioned, success ever since, both as the oldest classical specimen of romantic fiction, and as one of the most remarkable monuments of modern genius. But though this may be enough to fill the measure of human fame and glory, it is not all to which Cervantes is entitled; for, if we would do him the justice that would have been dearest to his own spirit, and even if we would ourselves fully comprehend and enjoy the whole of his Don Quixote, we should, as we read it, bear in mind, that this delightful romance was not the result of a youthful exuberance of feeling and a happy external condition, nor composed in his best years, when the spirits of its author were light and his hopes high; but that — with all its unquenchable and irresistible humor, with its bright views of the world, and its cheerful trust in goodness and virtue — it was written in his old age, at the conclusion of a life nearly every step

of which had been marked with disappointed expectations, disheartening struggles and sore calamities; that he began it in a prison, and that it was finished when he felt the hand of death pressing heavy and cold upon his heart. If this be remembered as we read, we may feel, as we ought to feel, what admiration and reverence are due, not only to the living power of Don Quixote, but to the character and genius of Cervantes."

The next name that meets us in the volume is that of Lope de Vega Carpio, the idol of his generation, who lived, in all the enjoyment of wealth and worldly honors, in the same city, and, as some accounts state, in the same street, where his illustrious rival was pining in poverty and neglect. If posterity has reversed the judgment of their contemporaries, still we cannot withhold our admiration at the inexhaustible invention of Lope, and the miraculous facility of his composition. His achievements in this way, perfectly well authenticated, are yet such as to stagger credibility. He wrote, in all, about eighteen hundred regular dramas, and four hundred autos — pieces of one act each. Besides this, he composed, at leisure intervals, no less than twenty-one printed volumes of miscellaneous poetry, including eleven narrative and didactic poems of much length, in *ottava rima*, and seven hundred sonnets, also in the Italian measure. His comedies, amounting to between two and three thousand lines each, were mostly rhymed, and interspersed with ballads, sonnets, and different kinds of versification. Critics have sometimes amused themselves with computing the amount of matter thus actually thrown off by him in the course of his dramatic career. The sum swells to twenty-one million, three hundred thousand verses! He lived to the age of seventy-two, and if we allow him to have employed fifty years — which will not be far from the truth — in his theatrical compositions, it will give an average of something like a play a week, through the whole period, to say nothing of the epics, and other miscellanies! He tells us further, that, on one occasion, he produced five entire plays in a fortnight. And his biographers assure us that, more than once, he turned off a whole drama in twenty-four hours. These plays, it will be recollected, with their stores of invention and fluent versification, were the delight of all classes of his countrymen, and the copious fountain of supply to half the theatres of Europe.

Well might Cervantes call him the "*monstruo de naturaleza*," — the "miracle of nature."

The vast popularity of Lope, and the unprecedented amount of his labors, brought with them, as might be expected, a substantial recompense. This remuneration was of the most honorable kind, for it was chiefly derived from the public. It is said to have amounted to no less than a hundred thousand ducats, — which, estimating the ducat at its probable value of six or seven dollars of our day, has no parallel — or, perhaps, not more than one — upon record.

Yet Lope did not refuse the patronage of the great. From the Duke of Sessa he is said to have received, in the course of his life, more than twenty thousand ducats. Another of his noble patrons was the Duke of Alva; not the terrible duke of the Netherlands, but his grandson — a man of some literary pretensions, hardly claimed for his great ancestor. Yet with the latter he has been constantly confounded, by Lord Holland, in his life of the poet, by Southey, after an examination of the matter, and lastly, though with some distrust, by Nicholas Antonio, the learned Castilian biographer. Mr. Ticknor shows, beyond a doubt, from a critical examination of the subject, that they are all in error. The inquiry and the result are clearly stated in the notes, and are one among the many evidences which these notes afford of the minute and very accurate researches of our author into matters of historical interest, that have baffled even the Castilian scholars.

We remember meeting with something of a similar blunder in Schlegel's *Dramatic Lectures*, where he speaks of the poet Garcilasso de la Vega as descended from the Peruvian Incas, and as having lost his life before Tunis. The fact is, that the poet died at Nice, and that, too, some years before the birth of the Inca Garcilasso, with whom Schlegel so strangely confounds him. One should be charitable to such errors, — though a dogmatic critic, like Schlegel, has as little right as any to demand such charity, — for we well know how difficult it is always to escape them, when, as in Castile, the same name seems to descend, as an heirloom, from one generation to another; if it be not, indeed, shared by more than one of the same generation. In the case of the Duke of Alva, there was not even this apology.

Mr. Ticknor has traced the personal history of Lope de Vega, so as to form a running commentary on his literary. It will be read with satisfaction, even by those who are familiar with Lord Holland's agreeable life of the poet, since the publication of which more ample researches have been made into the condition of the Castilian drama. Those who are disposed to set too high a value on the advantages of literary success may learn a lesson by seeing how ineffectual it was to secure the happiness of that spoiled child of fortune. We give our author's account of his latter days, when his mind had become infected with the religious gloom which has too often settled round the evening of life with the fanatical Spaniard.

"But as his life drew to a close, his religious feelings, mingled with a melancholy fanaticism, predominated more and more. Much of his poetry composed at this time expressed them; and at last they rose to such a height, that he was almost constantly in a state of excited melancholy, or, as it was then beginning to be called, of hypochondria. Early in the month of August, he felt himself extremely weak, and suffered more than ever from that sense of discouragement which was breaking down his resources and strength. His thoughts, however, were so exclusively occupied with his spiritual condition, that, even when thus reduced, he continued to fast, and on one occasion went through with a private discipline so cruel, that the walls of the apartment where it occurred were afterwards found sprinkled with his blood. From this he never recovered. He was taken ill the same night; and, after fulfilling the offices prescribed by his Church with the most submissive devotion,—mourning that he had ever been engaged in any occupations but such as were exclusively religious,—he died on the 25th of August, 1635, nearly seventy-three years old.

"The sensation produced by his death was such as is rarely witnessed even in the case of those upon whom depends the welfare of nations. The Duke of Sessa, who was his especial patron, and to whom he left his manuscripts, provided for the funeral in a manner becoming his own wealth and rank. It lasted nine days. The crowds that thronged to it were immense. Three bishops officiated, and the first nobles of the land attended as mourners. Eulogies and poems followed on all sides, and in numbers all but incredible. Those written in Spain make one considerable volume, and end with a drama in which his apotheosis was brought upon the public stage. Those written in Italy

are hardly less numerous, and fill another. But more touching than any of them was the prayer of that much-loved daughter who had been shut up from the world fourteen years, that the long funeral procession might pass by her convent and permit her once more to look on the face she so tenderly venerated; and more solemn than any was the mourning of the multitude, from whose dense mass audible sobs burst forth, as his remains slowly descended from their sight into the house appointed for all living."

Mr. Ticknor follows up his biographical sketch of Lope with an analysis of his plays, concluding the whole with a masterly review of his qualities as a dramatic writer. The discussion has a wider import than at first appears. For Lope de Vega, although he built on the foundations of the ancient drama, yet did this in such a manner as to settle the forms of this department of literature forever for his countrymen.

It would be interesting to compare the great Spanish dramatist with Shakspeare, who flourished at the same period, and who, in like manner, stamped his own character on the national theatre. Both drew their fictions from every source indiscriminately, and neither paid regard to probabilities of chronology, geography, or scarcely history. Time, place, and circumstance were of little moment in their eyes. Both built their dramas on the romantic model, with its magic scenes of joy and sorrow, in the display of which each was master in his own way; though the English poet could raise the tone of sentiment to a moral grandeur, which the Castilian, with all the tragic coloring of his pencil, could never reach. Both fascinated their audiences by that sweet and natural flow of language, that seemed to set itself to music as it was uttered. But, however much alike in other points, there was one distinguishing feature in each, which removed them and their dramas far as the poles asunder.

Shakspeare's great object was the exhibition of character. To this every thing was directed. Situation, dialogue, story, — all were employed only to this great end. This was in perfect accordance with the taste of his nation, as shown through the whole of its literature, from Chaucer to Scott. Lope de Vega, on the other hand, made so little account of character that he reproduces the same leading personages, in his differ-

ent plays, over and over again, as if they had been all cast in the same mould. The *galan*, the *dama*, the *gracioso*, or buffoon, recur as regularly as the clown in the old English comedy, and their *rôle* is even more precisely defined.

The paramount object with Lope was the intrigue — the story. His plays were, what Mr. Ticknor well styles them, dramatic novels. And this, as our author remarks, was perfectly conformable to the prevalent spirit of Spanish literature — clearly narrative — as shown in its long epics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, its host of ballads, its gossiping chronicles, its chivalrous romances. The great purpose of Lope was to excite and maintain an interest in the story. “Keep the *dénouement* in suspense,” he says; “if it be once surmised, your audience will turn their backs on you.” He frequently complicates his intrigues in such a manner that only the closest attention can follow them. He cautions his hearers to give this attention, especially at the outset.

Lope, with great tact, accommodated his theatre to the prevailing taste of his countrymen. “Plautus and Terence,” he says, “I throw into the fire when I begin to write;” — thus showing that it was not by accident, but on a settled principle that he arranged the forms of his dramas. It is the favorite principle of modern economists, that of consulting the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Lope did so, and was rewarded for it, not merely by the applause of the million, but by that of every Spaniard, high and low, in the country. In all this, Lope de Vega acted on strictly philosophical principles. He conformed to the romantic, although the distinction was not then properly understood; and he thought it necessary to defend his departure from the rules of the ancients. But, in truth, such rules were not suited to the genius and usages of the Spaniards, any more than of the English; and more than one experiment proved that they would be as little tolerated by the one people as the other.

It is remarkable that the Spaniards, whose language rests so broadly on the Latin, in the same manner as with the French and the Italians, should have refused to rest their literature, like them, on the classic models of antiquity, and have chosen to conform to the romantic spirit of the more northern nations of the Teutonic family. It was the paramount influence of the Gothic element in their character,

coöperating with the peculiar, and most stimulating influences of their early history.

We close our remarks on Lope de Vega with some excellent reflections of our author on the rapidity of his composition, and showing to what extent his genius was revered by his contemporaries.

“Lope de Vega’s immediate success, as we have seen, was in proportion to his rare powers and favorable opportunities. For a long time, nobody else was willingly heard on the stage; and during the whole of the forty or fifty years that he wrote for it, he stood quite unapproached in general popularity. His unnumbered plays and farces, in all the forms that were demanded by the fashions of the age, or permitted by religious authority, filled the theatres both of the capital and the provinces; and so extraordinary was the impulse he gave to dramatic representations, that, though there were only two companies of strolling players at Madrid when he began, there were, about the period of his death, no less than forty, comprehending nearly a thousand persons.

“Abroad, too, his fame was hardly less remarkable. In Rome, Naples, and Milan, his dramas were performed in their original language; in France and Italy, his name was announced in order to fill the theatres when no play of his was to be performed; and once even, and probably oftener, one of his dramas was represented in the seraglio at Constantinople. But perhaps neither all this popularity, nor yet the crowds that followed him in the streets and gathered in the balconies to watch him as he passed along, nor the name of Lope, that was given to whatever was esteemed singularly good in its kind, is so striking a proof of his dramatic success, as the fact, so often complained of by himself and his friends, that multitudes of his plays were fraudulently noted down as they were acted, and then printed for profit throughout Spain; and that multitudes of other plays appeared under his name, and were represented all over the provinces, that he had never even heard of till they were published and performed.

“A large income naturally followed such popularity, for his plays were liberally paid for by the actors; and he had patrons of a munificence unknown in our days, and always undesirable. But he was thriftless and wasteful; exceedingly charitable; and, in hospitality to his friends, prodigal. He was, therefore, almost always embarrassed. At the end of his ‘Jerusalem,’ printed as early as 1609, he complains of the pressure of his domestic affairs; and in his old age he addressed some verses, in the nature of a petition, to the still more thriftless Philip the Fourth,

asking the means of living for himself and daughter. After his death, his poverty was fully admitted by his executor; and yet, considering the relative value of money, no poet, perhaps, ever received so large a compensation for his works.

"It should, however, be remembered, that no other poet ever wrote so much with popular effect. For, if we begin with his dramatic compositions, which are the best of his efforts, and go down to his epics, which, on the whole, are the worst, we shall find the amount of what was received with favor, as it came from the press, quite unparalleled. And when to this we are compelled to add his own assurance, just before his death, that the greater part of his works still remained in manuscript, we pause in astonishment, and, before we are able to believe the account, demand some explanation that will make it credible;—an explanation which is the more important, because it is the key to much of his personal character, as well as of his poetical success. And it is this. No poet of any considerable reputation ever had a genius so nearly related to that of an improvisator, or ever indulged his genius so freely in the spirit of improvisation. This talent has always existed in the southern countries of Europe; and in Spain has, from the first, produced, in different ways, the most extraordinary results. We owe to it the invention and perfection of the old ballads, which were originally improvised and then preserved by tradition; and we owe to it the *seguidillas*, the *boleros*, and all the other forms of popular poetry that still exist in Spain, and are daily poured forth by the fervent imaginations of the uncultivated classes of the people, and sung to the national music, that sometimes seems to fill the air by night as the light of the sun does by day.

"In the time of Lope de Vega, the passion for such improvisation had risen higher than it ever rose before, if it had not spread out more widely. Actors were expected sometimes to improvise on themes given to them by the audience. Extemporaneous dramas, with all the varieties of verse demanded by a taste formed in the theatres, were not of rare occurrence. Philip the Fourth, Lope's patron, had such performed in his presence, and bore a part in them himself. And the famous Count de Lemos, the viceroy of Naples, to whom Cervantes was indebted for so much kindness, kept, as an *apanage* to his viceroyalty, a poetical court, of which the two Argensolas were the chief ornaments, and in which extemporaneous plays were acted with brilliant success.

"Lope de Vega's talent was undoubtedly of near kindred to this genius of improvisation, and produced its extraordinary results by a similar process, and in the same spirit. He dictated

verse, we are told, with ease, more rapidly than an amanuensis could take it down ; and wrote out an entire play in two days, which could with difficulty be transcribed by a copyist in the same time. He was not absolutely an improvisator, for his education and position naturally led him to devote himself to written composition, but he was continually on the borders of whatever belongs to an improvisator's peculiar province ; was continually showing, in his merits and defects, in his ease, grace, and sudden resource, in his wildness and extravagance, in the happiness of his versification and the prodigal abundance of his imagery, that a very little more freedom, a very little more indulgence given to his feelings and his fancy, would have made him at once and entirely, not only an improvisator, but the most remarkable one that ever lived."

We pass over the long array of dramatic writers who trod closely in the footsteps of their great master, as well as a lively notice of the satirist Quevedo, and come at once to Calderon de la Barca, the great poet who divided with Lope the empire of the Spanish stage.

Our author has given a full biography of this famous dramatist, to which we must refer the reader ; and we know of no other history in English where he can meet with it, at all. Calderon lived in the reign of Philip the Fourth, which, extending from 1621 to 1665, comprehends the most flourishing period of the Castilian theatre. The elegant tastes of the monarch, with his gay and gracious manners, formed a contrast to the austere temper of the other princes of the house of Austria. He was not only the patron of the drama, but a professor of the dramatic art, and indeed a performer. He wrote plays himself, and acted them in his own palace. His nobles, following his example, turned their saloons into theatres ; and the great towns, and many of the smaller ones, partaking of the enthusiasm of the court, had their own theatres and companies of actors, which, altogether, amounted, at one time, to no less than three hundred. One may understand that it required no small amount of material to keep such a vast machinery in motion.

At the head of this mighty apparatus was the poet Calderon, the favorite of the court even more than Lope de Vega, but not more than he the favorite of the nation. He was fully entitled to this high distinction, if we are to receive half that is said of him by the German critics, among whom

Schlegel particularly celebrates him as displaying the purest model of the romantic ideal, the most perfect development of the sentiments of love, heroism, and religious devotion. This exaggerated tone of eulogy calls forth the rebuke of Sismondi, who was educated in a different school of criticism, and whose historical pursuits led him to look below the surface of things to their moral tendencies. By this standard, Calderon has failed. And yet it seems to be a just standard, even when criticizing a work by the rules of art; for a disregard of the obvious laws of morality is a violation of the principles of taste, on which the beautiful must rest. Not that Calderon's plays are chargeable with licentiousness or indecency to a greater extent than was common in the writers of the period. But they show a lamentable confusion of ideas in regard to the first principles of morality, by entirely confounding the creed of the individual with his religion. A conformity to the established creed is virtue, the departure from it vice. It is impossible to conceive, without reading his performances, to what revolting consequences this confusion of the moral perceptions perpetually leads.

Yet Calderon should not incur the reproach of hypocrisy, but that of fanaticism. He was the very dupe of superstition; and the spirit of fanaticism he shares with the greater part of his countrymen—even the most enlightened—of that period. Hypocrisy may have been the sin of the Puritan, but fanaticism was the sin of the Catholic Spaniard of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The one quality may be thought to reflect more discredit on the heart, the other on the head. The philosopher may speculate on their comparative moral turpitude; but the pages of history show that fanaticism armed with power has been the most fruitful parent of misery to mankind.

Calderon's drama turns on the most exaggerated principles of honor, jealousy, and revenge, mingled with the highest religious exaltation. Some of these sentiments, usually referred to the influence of the Arabs, Mr. Ticknor traces to the ancient Gothic laws, which formed the basis of the early Spanish jurisprudence. The passages he cites are pertinent, and his theory is plausible; yet, in the relations with woman, we suspect much must still be allowed for the long contact with the jealous Arabian.

Calderon's characters and sentiments are formed, for the most part, on a purely ideal standard. The incidents of his plots are even more startling than those of Lope de Vega, more monstrous than the fictions of Dumas or Eugene Sue. But his thoughts are breathed forth in the intoxicating language of passion, with all the glowing imagery of the East, and in tones of the richest melody of which the Castilian tongue is capable.

Mr. Ticknor has enlivened his analysis of Calderon's drama with several translations, as usual, from which we should be glad to extract, but must content ourselves with the concluding portion of his criticism, where he sums up the prominent qualities of the bard.

"Calderon neither effected nor attempted any great changes in the forms of the drama. Two or three times, indeed, he prepared dramas that were either wholly sung, or partly sung and partly spoken; but even these, in their structure, were no more operas than his other plays, and were only a courtly luxury, which it was attempted to introduce, in imitation of the genuine opera just brought into France by Louis the Fourteenth, with whose court that of Spain was now intimately connected. But this was all. Calderon has added to the stage no new form of dramatic composition. Nor has he much modified those forms which had been already arranged and settled by Lope de Vega. But he has shown more technical exactness in combining his incidents, and arranged every thing more skilfully for stage-effect. He has given to the whole a new coloring, and in some respects, a new physiognomy. His drama is more poetical in its tone and tendencies, and has less the air of truth and reality, than that of his great predecessor. In its more successful portions, — which are rarely objectionable from their moral tone, — it seems almost as if we were transported to another and more gorgeous world, where the scenery is lighted up with unknown and preternatural splendor, and where the motives and passions of the personages that pass before us are so highly wrought, that we must have our own feelings not a little stirred and excited before we can take an earnest interest in what we witness or sympathize in its results. But even in this he is successful. The buoyancy of life and spirit that he has infused into the gayer divisions of his drama, and the moving tenderness that pervades its graver and more tragical portions, lift us unconsciously to the height where alone his brilliant exhibitions can prevail with our imaginations, — where alone we can be interested and deluded, when we find

ourselves in the midst, not only of such a confusion of the different forms of the drama, but of such a confusion of the proper limits of dramatic and lyrical poetry.

“To this elevated tone, and to the constant effort necessary in order to sustain it, we owe much of what distinguishes Calderon from his predecessors, and nearly all that is most individual and characteristic in his separate merits and defects. It makes him less easy, graceful, and natural than Lope. It imparts to his style a mannerism, which, notwithstanding the marvellous richness and fluency of his versification, sometimes wearies and sometimes offends us. It leads him to repeat from himself till many of his personages become standing characters, and his heroes and their servants, his ladies and their confidants, his old men and his buffoons, seem to be produced, like the masked figures of the ancient theatre, to represent, with the same attributes and in the same costume, the different intrigues of his various plots. It leads him, in short, to regard the whole of the Spanish drama as a form, within whose limits his imagination may be indulged without restraint; and in which Greeks and Romans, heathen divinities, and the supernatural fictions of Christian tradition, may be all brought out in Spanish fashions and with Spanish feelings, and led, through a succession of ingenious and interesting adventures, to the catastrophes their stories happen to require.

“In carrying out this theory of the Spanish drama, Calderon, as we have seen, often succeeds, and often fails. But when he succeeds, his success is sometimes of no common character. He then sets before us only models of ideal beauty, perfection, and splendor; — a world, he would have it, into which nothing should enter but the highest elements of the national genius. There, the fervid, yet grave, enthusiasm of the old Castilian heroism; the chivalrous adventures of modern, courtly honor; the generous self-devotion of individual loyalty; and that reserved, but passionate love, which, in a state of society where it was so rigorously withdrawn from notice, became a kind of unacknowledged religion of the heart; — all seem to find their appropriate home. And when he has once brought us into this land of enchantment, whose glowing impossibilities his own genius has created, and has called around him forms of such grace and loveliness as those of Clara and Doña Angela, or heroic forms like those of Tuzani, Mariamne, and Don Ferdinand, then he has reached the highest point he ever attained, or ever proposed to himself; — he has set before us the grand show of an idealized drama, resting on the purest and noblest elements of the Spanish national character, and one which, with all its un-

questionable defects, is to be placed among the extraordinary phenomena of modern poetry."

We shall not attempt to follow down the long file of dramatic writers who occupy the remainder of the period. Their name is legion ; and we are filled with admiration, as we reflect on the intrepid diligence with which our author has waded through this amount of matter, and the fidelity with which he has rendered to the respective writers literary justice. We regret, however, that we have not space to select, as we had intended, some part of his lively account of the Spanish players, and of the condition of the stage. It is collected from various obscure sources, and contains many curious particulars. They show that the Spanish theatre was conducted in a manner so dissimilar from what exists in other European nations as perfectly to vindicate its claims to originality.

It must not be supposed that the drama, though the great natural diversion, was allowed to go on in Spain, any more than in other countries, in an uninterrupted flow of prosperity. It met with considerable opposition more than once in its career ; and, on the representations of the clergy, at the close of Philip the Second's reign, performances were wholly interdicted, on the ground of their licentiousness. For two years the theatre was closed. But, on the death of that gloomy monarch, the drama, in obedience to the public voice, was renewed in greater splendor than before. It was urged by its friends that the theatre was required to pay a portion of its proceeds to certain charitable institutions, and this made all its performances in some sort an exercise of charity. Lope de Vega also showed his address by his *Comedias de Santos*, under which pious name the life of some saint or holy man was portrayed, which, however edifying in its close, afforded, too often, as great a display of profligacy in its earlier portions as is to be found in any of the secular plays of the *capa y espada*. His experiment seems to have satisfied the consciences of the opponents of the drama, or at least to have silenced their opposition. It reminds us of the manner in which some among us, who seem to have regarded the theatre with the antipathy entertained by our Puritan fathers, have found their scruples vanish at witnessing these

exhibitions under the more reputable names of "Athenæum," "Museum," or "Lyceum."

Our author has paid due attention to the other varieties of elegant literature which occupy this prolific period. We can barely enumerate the titles. Epic poetry has not secured to itself the same rank in Castile as in many other countries. At the head stands the "Araucana" of Ercilla, which Voltaire appears to have preferred to "Paradise Lost"! Yet it is little more than a chronicle done into rhyme; and, notwithstanding certain passages of energy and poetic eloquence, it is of more value as the historical record of an eye-witness than as a work of literary art.

In Pastoral poetry the Spaniards have better specimens. But they are specimens of an insipid kind of writing, notwithstanding it has found favor with the Italians, to whom it was introduced by a Spaniard — a Spaniard in descent — the celebrated author of the "Arcadia."

In the higher walks of Lyrical composition they have been more distinguished. The poetry of Herrera, in particular, seems to equal, in its dithyrambic flow, the best models of classic antiquity; while the Muse of Luis de Leon is filled with the genuine inspiration of Christianity. Mr. Ticknor has given a pleasing portrait of this gentle enthusiast, whose life was consecrated to Heaven, and who preserved a tranquillity of temper unruffled by all the trials of an unmerited persecution.

We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of quoting a translation of one of his odes, as the last extract from our author. The subject is, the feelings of the disciples on witnessing the ascension of their Master.

"And dost thou, holy Shepherd, leave
Thine unprotected flock alone,
Here, in this darksome vale, to grieve,
While thou ascend'st thy glorious throne?"

"O, where can they their hopes now turn,
Who never lived but on thy love?
Where rest the hearts for thee that burn,
When thou art lost in light above?"

"How shall those eyes now find repose
That turn, in vain, thy smile to see?"

What can they hear save mortal woes,
Who lose thy voice's melody?

“And who shall lay his tranquil hand
Upon the troubled ocean's might?
Who hush the winds by his command?
Who guide us through this starless night?

“For THOU art gone! — that cloud so bright,
That bears thee from our love away,
Springs upward through the dazzling light,
And leaves us here to weep and pray!”

A peculiar branch of Castilian literature is its Proverbs; those extracts of the popular wisdom, — “short sentences from long experience,” as Cervantes publicly styles them. They have been gathered, more than once, in Spain, into printed collections. One of these, in the last century, contains no less than twenty-four thousand of these sayings! And a large number was still left floating among the people. It is evidence of extraordinary sagacity in the nation, that its humblest classes should have made such a contribution to its literature. They have an additional value with purists for their idiomatic richness of expression, — like the *riboboli* of the Florentine mob, which the Tuscan critics hold in veneration as the racy runnings from the dregs of the people. These popular maxims may be rather compared to the copper coin of the country, which has the widest circulation of any, and bears the true stamp of antiquity — not adulterated, as is too often the case with the finer metals.

The last department we shall notice is that of the Spanish Tales — rich, various, and highly picturesque. One class — the *picaresco* tales — are those with which the world has become familiar in the specimen afforded by the “Gil Blas” of Le Sage, an imitation — a rare occurrence — surpassing the original. This amusing class of fictions has found peculiar favor with the Spaniards, from its lively sketches of character, and the contrast it delights to present of the pride and the poverty of the *hidalgo*. Yet this kind of satirical fiction was invented by a man of rank, and one of the proudest of his order.

Our remarks have swelled to a much greater compass than we had intended, owing to the importance of the work before

us, and the abundance of the topics, little familiar to the English reader. We have no room, therefore, for further discussion of this second period, so fruitful in great names, and pass over, though reluctantly, our author's criticism on the historical writings of the age, in which he has penetrated below the surface of their literary forms to the scientific principles on which they were constructed.

Neither can we pause on the last of the three great periods into which our author has distributed the work, and which extends from the accession of the Bourbon dynasty in 1700 to some way into the present century. The omission is of the less consequence, from the lamentable decline of the literature, owing to the influence of French models, as well as to the political decline of the nation under the last princes of the Austrian dynasty. The circumstances which opened the way both to this social and literary degeneracy are well portrayed by Mr. Ticknor, and his account will be read with profit by the student of history.

We regret still more that we can but barely allude to the Appendix, which, in the eye of the Spanish critic, will form not the least important portion of the work. Besides several long poems, highly curious for their illustration of the ancient literature, now for the first time printed from the original manuscripts, we have, at the outset, a discussion of the origin and formation of the Castilian tongue, a truly valuable philological contribution. The subject has too little general attraction to allow its appearance in the body of the text; but those students who would obtain a thorough knowledge of the Castilian and the elements of which it is compounded, will do well to begin the perusal of the work with this elaborate essay.

Neither have we room to say any thing of our author's inquiry into the genuineness of two works which have much engaged the attention of Castilian scholars, and both of which he pronounces apocryphal. The manner in which the inquiry is conducted affords a fine specimen of literary criticism. In one of these discussions occurs a fact worthy of note. An ecclesiastic named Barrientos, of John the Second's court, has been accused of delivering to the flames, on the charge of necromancy, the library of a scholar then lately deceased, the famous marquis of Villena. The good bishop,

from his own time to the present, has suffered under this grievous imputation, which ranks him with Omar. Mr. Ticknor now cites a manuscript letter of the bishop himself, distinctly explaining that it was by the royal command that this literary *auto da fê* was celebrated. This incident is one proof among many of the rare character of our author's materials, and of the careful study which he has given to them.

Spanish literature has been until now less thoroughly explored than the literature of almost any other European nation. Everybody has read "Gil Blas," and, through this foreign source, has got a good idea of the social condition of Spain, at the period to which it belongs; and the social condition of that country is slower to change than that of any other country. Everybody has read "Don Quixote," and thus formed, or been able to form, some estimate of the high value of the Castilian literature. Yet the world, for the most part, seems to be content to take Montesquieu's witticism for truth — that "the Spaniards have produced one good book, and the object of that was to laugh at all the rest." All, however, have not been so ignorant; and more than one cunning adventurer has found his way into the pleasant field of Castilian letters, and carried off materials of no little value for the composition of his own works. Such was Le Sage, as shown in more than one of his productions; such, too, were various of the dramatic writers of France and other countries, where the extent of the plunder can only be estimated by those who have themselves delved in the rich mines of Spanish lore.

Mr. Ticknor has now, for the first time, fully surveyed the ground, systematically arranged its various productions, and explored their character and properties. In the disposition of his immense mass of materials he has maintained the most perfect order, so distributing them as to afford every facility for the comprehension of the student.

We are everywhere made conscious of the abundance, not merely of these materials, — though one third of the subjects brought under review, at least, are new to the public, — but of the writer's intellectual resources. We feel that we are supplied from a reservoir that has been filled to overflowing from the very fountains of the Muses; which is, moreover, fed from other sources than those of the Castilian

literature. By his critical acquaintance with the literatures of other nations, Mr. Ticknor has all the means at command for illustration and comparison. The extent of this various knowledge may be gathered from his notes, even more than from the text. A single glance at these will show on how broad a foundation the narrative rests. They contain stores of personal anecdote, criticism, and literary speculation, that might almost furnish materials for another work like the present.

Mr. Ticknor's *History* is conducted in a truly philosophical spirit. Instead of presenting a barren record of books, — which, like the catalogue of a gallery of paintings, is of comparatively little use to those who have not previously studied them, — he illustrates the works by the personal history of their authors, and this, again, by the history of the times in which they lived ; affording, by the reciprocal action of one on the other, a complete record of Spanish civilization, both social and intellectual. It would be difficult to find a work more thoroughly penetrated with the true Castilian spirit, or to which the general student, or the student of civil history, may refer with no less advantage than one who is simply interested in the progress of letters. A pertinent example of this is in the account of Columbus, which contains passages from the correspondence of that remarkable man, which, even after all that has been written on the subject, — and so well written, — throw important light on his character.

The tone of criticism in these volumes is temperate and candid. We cannot but think Mr. Ticknor has profited largely by the former discussion of this subject in his academic lectures. Not that the present book bears much resemblance to those lectures, — certainly not more than must necessarily occur in the discussion of the same subject by the same mind, after a long interval of time. But this interval has enabled him to review, and no doubt in some cases to reverse his earlier judgments, and his present decisions come before us as the ripe results of a long and patient meditation. This gives them still higher authority.

We cannot conclude without some notice of the style, so essential an element in a work of elegant literature. It is clear, classical, and correct, with a sustained moral dignity that not unfrequently rises to eloquence. But it is usually dis-

tinguished by a calm, philosophical tenor, that is well suited to the character of the subject. It is especially free from any tendency to mysticism, — from vagueness of expression, a pretty sure indication of vague conceptions in the mind of the author, which he is apt to dignify with the name of philosophy.

In our criticism on Mr. Ticknor's labors, we may be thought to have dwelt too exclusively on his merits. It may be that we owe something to the contagion of his own generous and genial tone of criticism on others. Or it may be that we feel more than common interest in a subject which is not altogether new to us; and it is only an acquaintance with the subject that can enable one to estimate the difficulties of its execution. Where we have had occasion to differ from our author, we have freely stated it. But such instances are few, and of no great moment. We consider the work as one that does honor to English literature. It cannot fail to attract much attention from European critics, who are at all instructed in the topics which it discusses. We predict with confidence that it will be speedily translated into Castilian, and into German; and that it must become the standard work on Spanish literature, not only for those who speak our own tongue, but for the Spaniards themselves.

We have still a word to add on the typographical execution of the book, not in reference to its mechanical beauty, which is equal to that of any other that has come from the Cambridge press, but in regard to its verbal accuracy. This is not an easy matter in a work like the present, involving such an amount of references in foreign languages, as well as the publication of poems of considerable length from manuscript, and that, too, in the Castilian. We doubt if any similar work of erudition has been executed by a foreign press with greater accuracy. We do not doubt that it would not have been so well executed, in this respect, by any other press in this country.